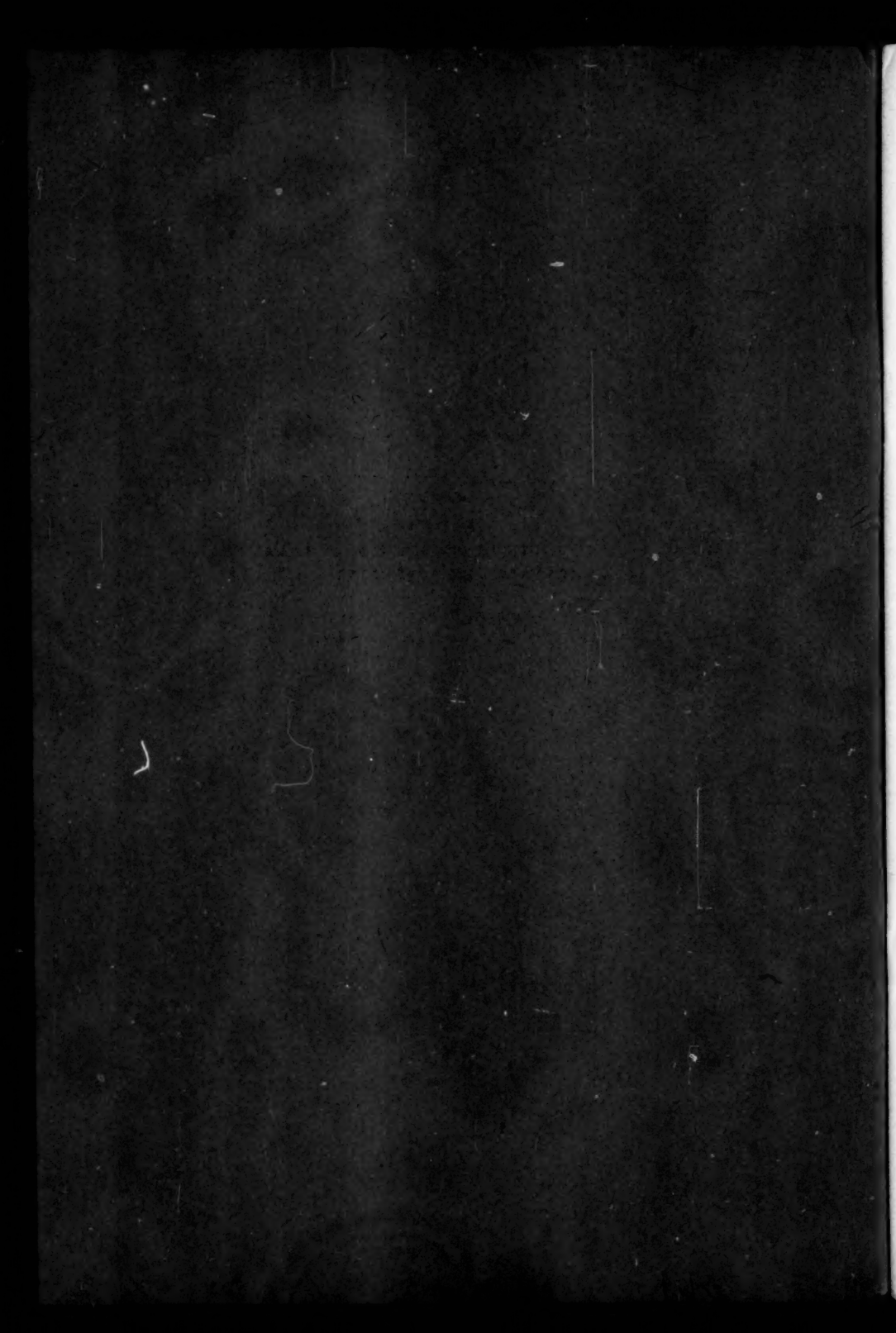


# PRIMITIVE MAN

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# PRIMITIVE MAN

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## THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY AMONG THE EARLY SEMITES

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IT is in Babylonia and Assyria that we find the Semites who have left us the earliest records of themselves,—of their history and of their religion. Next to these records, and of more recent date, are the Biblical writings, which, however, stand in a class by themselves and must be studied separately. We limit ourselves, therefore, to Assyria and Babylonia which give us the more ancient historical evidence.

The land from which our evidence comes includes Babylonia in the south, that is, the great alluvial plain extending from near modern Bagdad on the Tigris, where the Tigris and Euphrates rivers approach most closely to each other, to about Kurna, where the two rivers finally meet forming the Šatt el Arab, a hundred miles from the Persian Gulf. Between these two points, Bagdad and Kurna, the plain measures some two hundred and forty miles.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> In the second millennium B. C., the Persian Gulf extended North as far as Kurna and other points, then on the Gulf, now a hundred or more miles away from it. Northwest of Babylonia as just defined, we have Mesopotamia, between the Upper Euphrates and the Tigris: the name is often used to include also Babylonia, but it seems preferable to distinguish as said above

Assyria proper is the land about the old city of Aššur, the modern Ka'at Šerkāt, with its center about one hundred and sixty miles north of Bagdad on the Tigris.<sup>2</sup> This is a more rough, mountainous country, where there lived a warlike people producing great soldiers. Important as the political history of Assyria may be, Assyria is less significant from the religious point of view than Babylonia. Assyria is really an offshoot of Babylonia, and does not contribute anything new. Its testimony need not be distinguished from that of Babylonia.

Babylonia, the great rich plain of the south, attracted man from the most remote antiquity. As soon as the different parts of the land took such form<sup>3</sup> that men could live there, he came. As the plain was formed in the north, Semites from the Northern Syrian desert and along the upper Euphrates (Mesopotamia, as above), occupied the new land. Then came the Martu or the Amurru (Amorites) who settled in the northern part of Babylonia. In the southern part of Babylonia, likewise, as the land emerges, it is occupied by another group of Semites of inferior civilization, coming from Arabia.<sup>4</sup> <sup>5</sup> In the same part of Babylonia we find another race, the Sumerians, who speak a different type of language,—a most remarkable people, in possession of a highly developed civilization long before the year 3000 B. C., and in possession of that civilization when they came to the southern part of Babylonia from we know not what original home.<sup>6</sup>

From the presence of the two races in Babylonia, we get the name used by the ancient Babylonians themselves to designate their country: the land of Sumer and Akkad. Sumer is the southern part where the Sumerian people and their civilization predominate. The Semitic element holds an inferior position. Here we have Eridu (Abu Šaharain), then on the Gulf (now almost one hundred and thirty miles from the mouth of Šatt el Arab),

<sup>2</sup> Further up the river are the cities destined to become famous in history, Kalhu (Kalah) and Ninua (Ninive)

<sup>3</sup> On its formation, cf. Woolley, *The Sumerians*, 1ff

<sup>4</sup> For status questionis, cf. Jean, *Milieu Biblique*, i, p. 7, note 2, and 314

<sup>5</sup> Woolley, *Sumerians*, 4-6

<sup>6</sup> Woolley, *Sumerians*, 7-13, considers the Sumerians as the latest arrivals, coming, not from Elam, but from a distance, probably by sea.

one of the holy,—or the holiest,—cities of the country, regarded by the Sumerians as the oldest in the land.<sup>7</sup> A little to the north of Eridu is Uru<sup>8</sup>, “Ur of the Chaldees” of the Bible, the home of Abraham (Tell el Obeid, Mugayyar), made so famous these last few years by the extraordinary discoveries of the British-American expedition. Northwest of Ur is Larsa (now Senkereh), one of the sanctuaries of the Sun-god Babbar (Šamaš). West of Larsa is Uruk (modern Warkah) associated with some of the chief gods of the Pantheon (Anu, Ištar, Nana), and the hero Gilgameš. North of Uruk is Šurruapak (now Fāra), the home of the Babylonian Noe, Utnapištim. East of Šurruapak near the Šatt el Hay is Umma (now Goḥa), and southeast of the latter, on the left bank of Šatt el Hay, is Lagaš (now Tello), illustrated about 2500 B. C. by Gudea, its *patesi*. Then northwest of Šurruapak, about one hundred and thirty miles northwest of Eridu, the southernmost city of Sumer, is Nippur (Nuffer), one of the leading religious centers of Sumer, near the northern border of Sumer.

The rest of Babylonia to the north of Nippur is the land where the Semitic element remains predominant, though under the civilizing influence of Sumer and for long periods subject to the political power of Sumer. This northern part of Babylonia is the land of Akkad with the cities of Barsip (now Birs Nimrūd) with its great temple of Nabū; Babylon (Bāb-ili or Bāb-ilāni), which was to rise to such prominence only later, especially under Hammurapi (about 1950); Kiš (Tell el Oheim), where there appears the name of a Semitic king about 3000 B. C.; Kutū (Cutha of the Bible) (Tell Ibrahim); near the northern end of Babylonia proper, Sippar (Abū Habbah), one of the most renowned sanctuaries of Babylonia, with its temple of Šamaš; and Agade or Akkad, the capital of the great Semitic Empire set up by Sargon about 2600 B. C.

Between the two races there is a long struggle for supremacy. But the Semites, a more virile race apparently, civilized by the Sumerians, gradually absorbed the Sumerian element. By the end of the third millenium, the third Sumerian dynasty of Ur becomes more and more semiticized. Little by little, the Sumerian

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Furlani, *La religione babilonese-assira* (1929), i, p. 7; Woolley, *Sumerians*, 8

<sup>8</sup> The seat of the worship of the moon-god, Nannar (Sin).

language dies out as a living language, and survives only as a liturgical language. The Semitic language of Akkad,—Babylonian and Assyrian,—spreads everywhere, to be displaced as a spoken language, gradually from about 900 B. C., by Aramaic, another Semitic language.

Thus, then, from a most remote period we have there a Semitic people of mixed origin, no doubt, and influenced in its whole life and civilization,—intellectually, morally, religiously,—by the Sumerians. We are pretty far from the primitive Semite, whatsoever he may have been. But here we have the earliest Semites revealing themselves to us in their records,—not mere echoes of their Sumerian teachers. Mr. Woolley (*The Sumerians*, p. 122) may be taken to make allowance for this when he speaks of “the more spiritual imagination of the Semite” as able “to transform into religion” some stories borrowed from the Sumerians.<sup>9</sup>

To help us form an idea of the religious-moral conceptions of the Assyrians and Babylonians, we have naturally in the first place their numerous texts of a moral and religious character. But we find valuable information also in their proper names, which are really sentences, more or less developed, expressing the religious preoccupations of the ordinary people. Of late this field has received considerable attention.<sup>10</sup> We have, too, the various terms of Akkadian expressing the essential moral ideas, though it would not be wise to build a theory on the etymology of words.

Beginning with the last point, but without insisting on it, we find the following principal terms<sup>11</sup>: *limuttu*, evil, wickedness, a generic term which does not say very much; *bêl limutti* means, in a general way, the evil, wicked man; in a moral text, a sort of examination of conscience, after asking whether the penitent has

<sup>9</sup> So also when speaking (p. 125) of the religion of the Sumerians, he declares that “throughout”...it...“is one not of love but of fear, fear whose limits are confined to this present life, fear of Beings, all-powerful, capricious, unmoral”. The Semites, though adopting the Sumerian gods, seem to raise them somewhat at least.

<sup>10</sup> Thus, in particular, the remarkable dissertation of B. Gemser, *De beteekenis der persoonsnaamen voor onze kennis van het leven en denken der oude Babyloniërs en Assyriërs*, 1924, 41f

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Dhorme, *La religion Assyro-Babylonienne*..., 231-232; Jean, *Le péché chez les Babyloniens et les Assyriens*, 29; Furlani, *La religione*... 2, 319-326

uttered what is not clean, despised his goddess, or uttered evil or what is not nice, the question is whether he has uttered evil, *Zalıptu*, a word which elsewhere seems to have also a more or less political connotation<sup>12</sup>; *hiṭu* or *hiṭitu*, from the verb, *haṭû*, the root common to all the Semitic languages for "sin": *bêl hiṭi* means the sinner. The word is used also of one rebelling against the authority of the king, just as we shall see sin a rebellion against the divinity. According to some, the religious meaning of rebellion against the god is the primary meaning.<sup>13</sup> *Annu* or *arnu*, *bêl arni* convey the same idea of rebellion against the order or norm, the order, namely, established by the divinity as will be seen; *qillatu*, a curse, implies the idea of disrespect—gross disrespect—for the will of the divinity; *šêrtu* which primitively denotes the anger of the divinity, then the sin of man which provoked the anger of the god, and then, finally, the consequence of the sin thus provoking the divinity, namely, the chastisement of the sin.<sup>14</sup>

For "just" and "right" we find two parallel terms: *Miṣaru* and *kittu*: *miṣaru* from a root meaning "to be right, straight", meaning thus "the right"; *kittu* from a root meaning "to be solid, true", is equivalent to "truth" or "justice". These two terms are used by the kings of Assyria and Babylonia in texts where they boast of establishing *kittu u miṣaru* and thereby promoting the welfare of their people. They denote the foundations of the social order. This, of course, supposes a criterion enabling one to distinguish between right and wrong. The words themselves, of course, suggest nothing as to the criterion. But the evidence is clear that justice and right come from the divinity.<sup>15</sup>

The proper names reveal this close association of the notions of justice and right with the Divinity. Thus a name identifies the god with right (*Miṣarum-Nusku*), describes him as the god of right (*il-miṣarum-Marduk*), the protector of right (*miṣarum-*

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Jean, *Le péché* . . . , 103, note 2; design on part of this or that people to make war on Assyria. Cf. Jean, *Péché* . . . 123, note 6; *Zalıptu* la *arašši*: the offence I will not commit (in a religious context, referring to the divinity).

<sup>13</sup> Furlani, *La religione*, 232

<sup>14</sup> Dhorme, *Religion*, 235; Jean, *Péché*, 122, note from preceding page

<sup>15</sup> Dhorme, *Religion*, 22 and References.



*nâsir*), as one who loves truth or justice (*Râim-kittim*; *Šamaš-râim-kitti*), as one who establishes truth solidly (*Muszis-Kittim*).<sup>16</sup> Quite naturally the presence of that virtue of truth, fidelity, appeals to the god, as we see from names meaning that this or that god knows or has known, i.e., cares for, the just or truthful: *ili* (or *Šamaš*) *kinam-idi*, *Nabû-kîn-idi*, *Nimurta-kîna-idi*.<sup>17</sup>

We are not surprised, then, to hear names acknowledging the divinity as the judge, to whom it belongs to promote the triumph of justice, and names appear which are short prayers that remind us of Old Testament formulas, appealing to the divinity for the victory of justice, or confessing the manifestation of justice by the divinity: *Anu-daiānu*, *Šamaš-daiān*, *Daiān-Ašur* (or *Marduk*) confess that this or that God is the "judge", and so close is the bond between the two ideas of "judge" and "god" that the word *Daiān* is the equivalent of "god" in some names such as *Daiān-Nā'id*: the Judge (god) is exalted. The same idea is to be found in such names as *Marduk-bêl-dani* (Marduk is the lord of judgment), *Idinanni-ilu/Šamaš* (God/Šamaš has judged me right). And so names express in various ways the believer's confidence in the justice of God: *ana-diniša-atkal* (in her justice I trust); *itti-Sin-dîn (i)* (with Sin is [my] right); *Sin-dinam-idên* (Sin has done right); *Addu/Ašur/Bêl/etc./dîni-epuš* (Addu, etc., has done right by me, done me justice); *dinam-ili* (judge right, my god); *Sin dinam-dîni* (Sin, judge my right); *Bêl/etc./dîni-amur* (Bel, etc., look upon my right). All of these last forms sound familiar, —like the Old Testament appeals of the just man to God to judge his cause.<sup>18</sup>

We are moving in the same general circle of ideas in the names that express the notion of retribution coming from the divinity, names frequent in the Cassite period (1750-1140), but occurring also in the earlier periods: *Mutîr-gimillîja* (the one who requites my good deed); *Nimurta-mutîr-gimilli*. However, as the expression had come to mean "to avenge", some of the names with it might be simply appeals to the god as the avenger, namely, punish-

<sup>16</sup> Gemser, 117; *idem*, 144

<sup>17</sup> Gemser, 111

<sup>18</sup> Gemser, 114-116; cf. Dhorme, *Religion*, 223



ing the enemy of the person, rather than the idea of reward for good done by the person.<sup>19</sup>

The names thus show us a close bond existing between the moral ideas and the divinity. We see this bond more closely still if we turn to the texts of moral-religious character and try from these to determine the moral law which the Assyro-Babylonians regarded as binding on their conscience. This includes duties towards the divinity and duties towards the neighbor.

We will first consider duties towards the divinity. Belief in the existence of the divinity is taken for granted. Babylonian thought, essentially religious, does not question this belief.<sup>20</sup> The gods, who are high, perfect beings, possessed of power and wisdom, are looked upon as the creators, preservers, rulers of man. The divinity is the author of whatever good man enjoys. Man addresses himself with perfect confidence to the divinity whom he calls his father and mother, husband, brother and sister.<sup>21</sup> But man is especially the servant of the gods and the fitting attitude of man is that of reverence or fear: *palāhu*. The word occurs repeatedly in the inscriptions and in the proper names as summing up the idea of religion.<sup>22</sup> But, as we may note in passing, it would be an exaggeration to identify this fear with "terror."<sup>23</sup>

Fear of the divinity implies acts of homage on the part of man, whereby man acknowledges his dependence on the gods. Man is not free to omit or neglect these acts of worship,—to do so would be to expose himself to the anger of the gods, and thus to punishment. One text will suffice to give us an idea of the Babylonian notion of the virtue of religion:<sup>24</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Gemser, 118-119

<sup>20</sup> In fact, in all the abundant Babylonian literature, only one text is known which is somewhat disrespectful towards the gods, but without questioning their existence. Cf. Gemser, 53-56

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Gemser, 100-8, 158-60

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Dhorme, *Religion*, 202f., 214f.; Jean, *Péché*, 91; Gemser, 171f

<sup>23</sup> Cf. Dhorme, 218f

<sup>24</sup> Dhorme, *Religion*, 217; Jean, *Péché*, 95f.; Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, 2, 421-22

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<sup>24</sup> Dhorme, *Religion*, 217; Jean, *Péché*, 95f.; Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, 2, 421-22

Daily pay homage to thy god:  
sacrifice, prayer, worthy incense.

Before thy god have a clean heart,  
this becomes the god!

Prayer, supplication and prostration  
daily thou shalt give. And he will give thee riches,  
and in abundance, through the god, thou shalt succeed!

In thy wisdom look upon the tablet:  
the fear [of god] begets good pleasure [good will of the god]  
sacrifice prolongs life  
and prayer releases from sin.

Religion, thus, is a moral duty, an obligation with a corresponding sanction. This obligation, we may add in view of the many texts speaking of the goodness and love of the gods, rests not merely on fear, but also on confidence.<sup>25</sup>

We now turn to the consideration of duties towards the neighbor. The essential principle regulating conduct towards the neighbor is *justice*: *Mišaru* and *kittu*: what is right and true, the rightness and truth which are the basis of the social order, being the will of the gods manifested by the King. For he is but the interpreter of the will of the gods, the one to whom they have delegated the duty of establishing justice on earth and of seeing its claims respected. Thus Hammurapi in the prologue to his Code says of himself: Anu and Bel called me, Hammurapi, the exalted prince, the worshiper of the gods [*palih ili*] to cause justice [*mišaram*] to prevail in the land, to destroy the wicked and the evil, to prevent the strong from oppressing the weak. . . . Justice and right in the land I established, the welfare of the people I caused to prosper [I promoted].

The law comes from the gods. The gods naturally intervene often, very often, in the administration of justice, in the enforcement of the law, in keeping with their character as judges. Nor was this rôle of judge a mere figure. In difficult cases where human judges are unable to ascertain the truth, the sentence is left to God, the parties appearing before God telling all they know before God.<sup>26</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Dhorme, 218f. In passing it may be noted that among the Babylonians—as among the Jews—the suffering of the just man and the success of the wicked raised problems. Cf. Dhorme, *Religion*, 216; Jean, *Péché*, 91f

<sup>26</sup> Dhorme, 223f

The precepts of that moral law, represented among other texts by a sort of examination of conscience, are contained in a collection of Incantations.<sup>27</sup> These precepts concern the family.<sup>28</sup> They impose respect for parents, older brother or sister, avoiding what may lead to estrangement among members of the family. Adultery is, naturally, condemned. They concern social relations: it is a duty to tell the truth, and to tell it so as never to lead astray.<sup>29</sup> It is wrong to sow discord, to use false scales or weights, to counterfeit money, etc.

Regarding the neighbor's property, one is bound to respect the rights of others. Thus it is forbidden to move the boundaries (*kudurru* and *aplu*) that serve as limits. Stealing and robbery are likewise condemned in every form.

The laws and numerous other texts mention many other points, and enter into all kinds of detail. But all this would not contribute much new to our question of the relations between religion and morality. Instead we may quote a few lines from a text used above, a sort of moral treatise giving the precepts of Utnapištim, the hero of the flood, to his children. This will be a sort of summary of man's duties to his fellows:

To thy adversary do no evil!  
 To him that does thee evil, requite good!  
 To thy enemy let justice come.  
 Give food to eat and strong drink to drink;  
 Seek the truth, take care of and honor [the parents]  
 For his god rejoices over such a man;  
 This pleases Samaš, and he requites him good.

And further on we are told that Samaš will punish one who speaks evil, who calumniates, etc.<sup>30</sup> Here we again find, between

<sup>27</sup> Jean, *Péché*, 103-5; cf. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien*, 2, 138; Dhorme, *Religion*, 226-30

<sup>28</sup> Cf. Jean, *Péché*, 105-8

<sup>29</sup> According to the interpretation adopted by Fr. Dhorme:

did he say yes for no?  
 did he say no for yes?  
 did he say things which are not clear?

According to another view: which were meant to be secret (Cf. Jean, *Péché*, 104, line 40)

<sup>30</sup> Meissner, *op. cit.*, 2, pp. 421-22

the moral duties of men and the divinity, the close bond which we have noted elsewhere, implying that morality is of an essentially religious character, that morality and religion are, in the Babylonian conception, inseparable.

But while recognizing the noble traits we may discern in the Babylonian's spiritual life, we should not overlook its grave deficiencies. This is not only a case of falling short of the ideal,—*video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*,—but it concerns the notions themselves which regulate life and conduct. Thus the texts give some fine precepts about the neighbor, but who is the neighbor? Apparently neighbors are only they who worship the same gods. Outside is the *mu-bara* or *barbaru*, the *nakru*, i.e., both foreigner and enemy, against whom there is no sin. In pious phrases praising the gods, the Kings of Assyria boast of the atrocities that attended their victories.<sup>31</sup>

Still more basically important is the absence, or almost total lack, of the notion of personal moral duties or personal morality, as pointed out by Father Dhorme and Father Jean.<sup>32</sup> We find some advice regarding hasty, intemperate speech, but practically nothing regarding the great duties of man towards himself. It looks as if the Babylonians had no idea of duty towards oneself. This explains the possibility of such a development as the sacred (religious) prostitution described by Herodotus (1, 199) and revealed by the texts of Babylonian origin which tell us of that special male and female priesthood, of its organization, of its life, of the part of the temples reserved to it. Thus, the *assinnu* and *kur-garû*, the sacred male prostitutes "whose manhood Istar has changed into womanliness"; the sacred female prostitutes, the *qadištu* or the *ištāritu*, living in a sort of convent, *gâgû*, and performing their service in the temple brothel, *bît aštammi*.<sup>33</sup> Strange in our eyes, revealing an entirely different attitude, is the fact that these priestesses came from good families, the chief priestess often belonging to the royal family.<sup>34</sup> Naturally, besides these consecrated personages, there were also the ordinary prostitutes, female and male (*harimtu*, *šamhatu* or *šamkatu*; *harmu*, *kulu'u*). The texts sup-

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Jean, *Péché*, 101-3

<sup>32</sup> Fr. Dhorme, 230f. and Fr. Jean, *Péché*, 117-19

<sup>33</sup> Cf. Meissner, 2, 67-71; 435f

<sup>34</sup> Meissner, 2, 435 and References



pose great looseness of life, and there is no word of blame, no attempt at reform of the prevailing immorality.

Such features of the Babylonian life are great deficiencies,—not altogether peculiar to the Babylonians. In any case they do not go against the other fact revealed so clearly by the texts, that religion and morality are bound together inseparably. Even the sacred prostitution testifies in favor of that bond, after its fashion. The goddess Ištar who presides over the transmission of life must have the honor of the first act of the young man or woman.<sup>85</sup> Hence, in the temples, that special priesthood at the disposal of those who have to make the offering. The underlying idea is noble, but its practical working out means a perversion of the moral sense; nevertheless it implies religion pervading the whole life of man, not limited to some acts of worship. It implies the conduct of man inspired by religion, the divinity ever present, imposing upon man the duties of religion, exacting man's obedience, and judging, rewarding or punishing man's obedience or disobedience.

#### **THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY AMONG THE EARLY GREEKS AND ROMANS**

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THE Greek and Roman religions, until a relatively late stage in their developments, were entirely distinct from each other. It is only from the 6th century B. C. that Greek religion began to influence the religious beliefs of Rome. Accordingly, in the present sketch of the relations between religion and morality among the early Greeks and Romans, each people will be treated separately.

#### **THE GREEKS**

Our whole approach to the study of Greek religion must be, obviously, the historical one. The first question then is: What sources are at our disposal? Our sources are literary and archaeological remains, fortunately very copious so far as ancient sources go, but not equally abundant for all periods of Greek religion, nor for all centers of Greek civilization in the ancient world.

<sup>85</sup> Jean, *Péché*, 118 and References



The extant Greek literature from Homer to Justinian is premeated with religious thought and myth. Among these literary sources, let it suffice to mention Homer, Hesiod, the Lyric Poets, the Dramatists, the historian Herodotus,—who in many ways anticipates the modern anthropologist, with his data on the customs and religious practices of the Greeks and foreign peoples,—the philosophers, particularly Plato, and the Attic orators; then later, the grammarians, scholiasts, lexicographers, geographical writers like Strabo and especially Pausanias, the moralist Plutarch, and lastly, the Christian Fathers with their polemical writings against paganism. This literary material, however, forms but a fraction of what once existed. There are serious gaps in our knowledge, continually confronting us. As will be noted a little later, we have no literary evidence for Greek religion before Homer save what is actually contained in the Homeric poems. Again, we often meet allusions in some of our latest ancient sources to religious institutions or practices which we know must go back to very early times, but which do not happen to be mentioned in our earlier extant sources.

Secondly, we have a great wealth of archeological remains and works of art of a religious character. These become really helpful, however, only from the 8th century B. C. on, when we are assisted in our interpretation of them by a steadily increasing number of non-literary texts, namely, the inscriptions. A large number of the latter are concerned directly or indirectly with religion. It should never be forgotten, as regards archeological remains in general, that unless they are supplemented by texts, literary or non-literary, they are by no means satisfactory sources of information.

In an estimate of Greek religion from whatever angle, the investigator is confronted by several other problems, in addition to that of sources, which make the study of Greek religious institutions almost unique in its difficulty. When we speak of Greek religion we ordinarily think of it in terms of the Homeric Poems or of its manifestations in Periclean Athens. Thanks to copious literary sources, inscriptions, and monumental remains, we best know Greek religion as practiced at Athens. But in a scientific approach to Greek religion we cannot confine ourselves so narrowly. In the scientific sense Greek religion must be understood

to designate all the religious beliefs and practices of the Greek race throughout its hundreds of communities in the ancient Mediterranean world, i.e. in Greece proper, in the islands of the Aegean Sea, on the coasts of Asia Minor, in Southern Italy and Sicily, in Egypt and Cyrene, and elsewhere from the Black Sea to Gaul and Spain.

In these multiple foundations, there existed, down to the time of Alexander at least, the most varied stages of political, social, and religious development. While many of the major Greek cults had numerous points in common wherever they flourished, yet they varied infinitely in detail and importance from city to city and from region to region. Furthermore, many of the Greek cults, even the major cults, were sometimes modified almost beyond recognition, under the influence of earlier religious beliefs and practices in force at the coming of the Greeks. One need only recall in this connection the worship of Artemis at Ephesus. Again, it should not be forgotten that there was nothing like a general conformity in doctrine, a system of orthodoxy, in the religion of the Greeks. Hence there was no central body of dogmas, so to speak, holding their religious beliefs in cohesion. The Greek priests, moreover, never formed a strong caste with great political and social authority and influence, and consequently were never conservers of orthodoxy in the sense of the Oriental priesthoods. The nearest approach to a system of doctrine which we find among the Greeks is in the several mystery religions with their fixed rites and beliefs, but the mystery religions appear at a relatively late stage in Greek religious development.

The study of Greek religion as a whole is complicated, also, as we have already said, by the fact that all parts of the Greek world did not progress with equal rapidity toward a higher form of civilization. We find, for example, an advanced religious development in the highly civilized city state of fifth-century Athens, while at this same period in the isolated region of Arcadia, primitive tribal, political, social, and religious conditions still prevailed. Human sacrifice was not abandoned in Arcadia, we know, before the 2nd century, A.D. Let this example suffice to show that to secure a true picture of the practices and influence of Greek religion we must study the latter in intimate connection with the general political and social history of the Greek world. Thanks to our sources, we see the relations between religious and political

and social development best at Athens. Religion modified profoundly the political and social institutions of the Athenian polis, and in turn was modified itself in the subsequent political, social, and intellectual growth of the Athenian state.

Lastly, as indicated at least implicitly above, the long period of the existence of Greek religion entails problems in itself. Greek religion covers a period of about two thousand years, from c. 1500 B. C. to 500 A. D. On account of the nature of our sources it is not always easy or even possible to evaluate many phases of Greek religion at certain times and places in this long development. It is particularly difficult to ascertain in many instances to what extent Greek religion was really a vital force in regulating moral conduct, because we frequently know so little about the ordinary daily life of Greek society.

With these general ideas on the problems which Greek religion presents to the investigator clearly in our minds, we are in a better position to take up the question of immediate concern to us: the relations between religion and morality among the early Greeks. Interpreting the term "early" as broadly as we can, we shall treat of Greek religion in the first thousand years of its existence, i.e. from about 1500 to about 500 B. C.

When the peoples whom we call the Greeks moved southward into central and southern Greece, and eastward across the islands of the Aegean Sea, in the course of the third and second millennia B. C., they found a higher civilization possessing, apparently, well developed political and social institutions, already long settled in these regions. This earlier civilization, which we call the Minoan-Mycenaean, unquestionably influenced the Greeks in many ways. But our evidence does not enable us to ascertain precisely what was the original religion of the Greek invaders, or just what elements they borrowed from the peoples they found in Greece on their coming. These peoples would seem to have been already influenced to some degree by their contacts with the Semites and Egyptians, a circumstance that complicates the problem further. Our knowledge of Minoan-Mycenaean religion, as well as of Minoan-Mycenaean political and social institutions in general, is still extremely unsatisfactory. We have numerous archeological remains, but so far we have not succeeded in deciphering the Minoan scripts, and as noted previously, stones without texts to

aid in their interpretation are largely silent as to the precise nature of a people's institutions. What little we know of the Minoan-Mycenaean and pre-Homeric Greek religion, we have, therefore, to piece together chiefly from archeological remains, and from the survivals which we can detect in Homer, and later in the various cults of historical Greece. On the basis of our meager evidence for this very early period, the period naturally of the greatest interest to anthropologists, it is simply impossible to enter into the question of the relations between religion and morality among the Greeks at this stage of their development.

Our earliest literary sources for Greek religion are the Homeric Poems, composed in Asia Minor between 900-800 B. C. Homer's religion is not primitive but is a fully developed anthropomorphic polytheism. The Homeric gods are glorified men enjoying greater than human power and possessing immortality. On the other hand, they need food and sleep and are subject to human passions. Zeus, the King of the gods, is sometimes spoken of as being absolutely supreme and again as being subject like all others to a vague power called Fate.

Throughout the Homeric Poems, the gods are looked upon as the sources of all blessings and, at the same time, the hostility or anger of the gods is considered the cause of all misfortunes. In times of suffering or disaster, the Homeric warrior immediately tries to discover what deity he has offended. The Homeric gods, while sometimes more immoral in their actions than men themselves, are, all in all, on the side of justice and mercy. At the beginning of the *Odyssey* there is a famous passage in which Zeus expresses his righteous attitude thus: "Look you now, how ready mortals are to blame the gods. It is from us, they say, that evils come, but they even of themselves, through their own blind folly, have sorrows beyond that which is ordained".<sup>1</sup>

The Homeric gods, particularly Zeus, protect the weak and destitute. The cult of Zeus as protector of the family and of strangers is already in evidence. The vengeance of the gods is solemnly invoked against those who injure suppliants, guests, or even beggars. The sanctity of oaths is proclaimed in the name of the dread divinities of the Lower World. The gods punish men es-

<sup>1</sup> *Odyssey* I, 32-34

pecially for their pride and insolence. Mindful of this, Achilles says very humbly at the death of Hector: "Lie thou dead; my fate will I accept when so Zeus willest to bring it to pass and the other immortal gods".<sup>2</sup> Sinfulness in Homer is ordinarily associated indeed with acts of human insolence, i.e. man's failure to recognize his own absolute dependence on the gods, and his neglect to offer them proper sacrifice. Homeric sin is related to our concept of sin chiefly in these points: breaking an oath, disrespect to one's father and mother, and ill treatment of the stranger, i.e. one's fellow man.

Men are obliged to sacrifice to the gods and by so doing are thought to enter into friendly communion with them. The gods in return for sacrifices are expected to grant favors and protection to their worshippers. Thus the priest Chryses says in his prayer to Apollo: "Hear me, thou of the silver bow, . . . if ever I roofed over a shrine to thy pleasing, or if ever I burned to thee fat thigh-pieces of bulls or goats, fulfill thou for me this prayer."<sup>3</sup> Such a form of worship may give the impression of a contract, but the evidence of the Homeric Poems as a whole would certainly seem to indicate that men do not feel that they can do more than persuade or win the good will of the divinities by prayers and sacrifices. There is no mention of magic in this connection in Homer.

Beyond a possible reference to the punishment of the perjured after death by the Erinyes, perhaps the personifications of the power of the curse that followed perjury, we hear of no retribution for ordinary mortals in the next life. On the other hand, Homer holds out little joy to the good in the world to come. A few favored mortals, like Menelaus, go to dwell in the happy Elysian Plain at the end of the world, but the vast majority of mankind must wander as shadowy, almost unreal, forms of their living selves in the gloomy and joyless halls of Hades, king of the Lower World. When Odysseus on his visit to Hades, meets the shade of Achilles and tries to console him in his lot, the latter reflects the Homeric attitude to the life after death in his well known answer: "Nay, seek not to speak soothingly to me of death, glorious Odysseus. I should choose, so I might live on earth, to

<sup>2</sup> *Iliad* 22, 365-366. For the punishment of Ajax for his insolence, see *Odyssey* 4, 499-510

<sup>3</sup> *Iliad* 1, 37-41

serve as the hireling of another, of some portionless man whose livelihood was but small, rather than to be lord over all the dead that have perished."<sup>4</sup>

As regards the relative importance of the sanctions of morality in Homer, Professor Clifford Moore is undoubtedly right when he says: "In Homer the sense of social obligations is much more keenly realized than is that of religious sanctions. The cardinal virtues are bravery, wisdom, love of home, and family, and regard for hospitality."<sup>5</sup>

The poet Hesiod, who lived about 700 B. C., our next great literary authority after Homer, puts his main emphasis on justice as the basis of social relations. Justice was the vital need of an age when the peasants of Central Greece were suffering a ruthless social and economic oppression at the hands of a hostile landed nobility. To his fundamental virtue of justice Hesiod assigns a supernatural origin: "Perses, put these words now in thy heart and harken to justice, but forget violence utterly. For this the son of Cronus has established as a rule for men. Fishes and wild beasts, and winged birds he ordained should devour one another, since there is no justice among them; but to man he has given justice which is far the best."<sup>6</sup> In accordance with justice, men must be kind to strangers, suppliants, and orphans, respect their parents, be hospitable to their friends, and refrain from adultery. From justice, the daughter of Zeus, there is no escape for those who act unjustly. Sooner or later the unjust receive divine punishment.

It should be observed that the motives underlying Hesiodic justice are utilitarian, not altruistic. Men sacrifice to the gods and act justly merely to gain material prosperity. Regarding the life after death Hesiod does not advance beyond Homer.

In the period from Hesiod to the Persian Wars, we see the relations between religion and morality most clearly revealed in the Greek city states or *poleis* which constitute the normal form of political and social life in the more progressive sections of the Greek world from the seventh century to the death of Alexander. The Greek polis was based essentially on the extension of the

<sup>4</sup> *Odyssey* 11, 488-493

<sup>5</sup> Clifford H. Moore, *The Religious Thought of the Greeks*, Cambridge, Mass., 1916, 20

<sup>6</sup> *Works and Days* 274-279



idea of the family and the clan to a larger group. The polis, consequently, was profoundly influenced from the first by religion. The divinities that presided over the family hearth and guided the relations of the members of the family with one another, and with their neighbors, now came to perform the same functions for the state. In such an identity of the religion of the family with that of the state religious duties became merged with civic duties, a fact which sometimes obscures to the eyes of the modern investigator the religious motivation of almost all the activities of the Greek city states in the days of their greatness, and which goes far to explain their clannish exclusiveness in their relations with one another.

Through the transformation of the family religion into a state religion, duties like marrying healthily and early, begetting children, cherishing and honoring one's parents, and protecting the orphan, thus came to be civic duties, but civic duties inspired and sanctioned by religion as well as by custom and law. Under such circumstances, as Farnell well puts it, "the state being the family writ large, private and public morality could not clash".<sup>7</sup>

Down to the time of the Persian Wars, then, the majority of the Greeks regarded the gods and their concern in the affairs of men much in the way which we have noted in Homer and Hesiod, except that we observe a steadily growing conviction of the idea of divine justice. As regards the future life,—outside of the mystery religions—, we hear little beyond that we have seen in Homer and Hesiod.

The mystery religions appear in Greece in the seventh and sixth centuries, B. C., and play a very important part in the subsequent history of Greek religion. But we cannot go into their history and problems here.<sup>8</sup> We are primarily concerned with two points only: To what extent, if any, did they promote morality, and on what conditions did they hold out a promise of a future life?

Orphism seems originally to have had no connection whatever with morality but it gradually acquired ethical principles akin to

<sup>7</sup> L. R. Farnell, art. *Greek Religion* in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. vi, 406

<sup>8</sup> For a good critical sketch of the early history of the Greek mystery religions, see F. M. Cornford, *Mystery Religions and Pre-Socratic Philosophy*, in *Cambridge Ancient History*, vol. iv, New York, 1926, 522-38



those which we find in Homeric religion and in the religion of the city state. According to the Orphic teaching the soul is imprisoned in the body through sin and must strive to become free from its prison house. This is accomplished by purification rites, by peculiar forms of abstinence, and by further rites, in part magical, whereupon the soul enters into union with the divinity in this life and is promised happiness in the next. After death the soul goes to Hades. Its existence in Hades is one of bliss or punishment according to its life on earth. The good soul enjoys the pleasures of an earthly paradise, while the evil soul suffers terrible tortures in the pits of Tartarus or Hell. After a thousand years, the soul, good or bad, is born again into earthly existence. The evil soul especially is not always reborn into human form, but into various lower animals. The good soul, after a number of such sojourns in Hades and rebirths on earth, would seem ultimately to have been rewarded with an endless life of bliss free from further incarnations. The evil soul is thought to suffer the punishments of Hell after death and to be subject to reincarnation indefinitely.

The Eleusinian Mysteries, on the whole, seem to have exerted a good moral influence. Greek writers of the fifth century B. C. tell us that those who had been initiated in these mysteries were inclined to take a more serious view of life and to show a sterner attitude on questions of justice. A vivid hope of future happiness was held out to the initiated, but as to the nature of this future happiness beyond the continued existence of the soul, we are not informed.

From the evidence at our disposal for the Orphic and Eleusinian Mysteries it is reasonable to believe that salvation depended almost entirely on fulfilling the requirements of a number of rites mostly non-moral in character. It is quite clear also that salvation was held out exclusively to the initiated.

#### THE ROMANS

Our approach here must likewise be historical, and hence our first concern is the sources. Our only early sources are archeological remains. They tell us little until the third century B. C. and after, when the inscriptions aid us in interpretation. In the inscriptions, the calendars with their indications of festivals, among other data, are particularly important. We receive no help in the

study of early Roman religion from mythology. The Romans never had a mythology of their own. The literary sources for Roman religion are all late, very few antedating the first century B. C. The Roman authorities on religious matters—men like Varro (our chief authority), Vergil and Ovid,—write under the influence of Greek learning. They would lead us to believe, for example, that the early Roman religion was anthropomorphic, when in reality it was not. These writers, therefore, are invaluable to us not so much for their own opinions and interpretations, as for the accurate descriptions which they furnish of ritual, cults, and festivals, which frequently bear unmistakable traces of the earlier religious situation.

We ordinarily employ the term early Roman religion to designate the period of Roman religious development from the eighth century or earlier to about the end of the sixth century, B. C. As far back as our sources of whatever kind permit us to go, we find the Roman religion a composite one. What elements were original with the Italic peoples when they pushed southward into the Italian peninsula in the course of the third and second millennia B. C., and what elements they borrowed from the earlier inhabitants, we cannot say definitely. The Etruscan influence on Roman religion dates only from the eighth or seventh century B. C., and was actually far less than was once supposed. The Etruscans may have given an impulse to anthropomorphic religion among the Romans and they certainly gave the latter their elaborate system of divination, although divination seems to have been practiced to some extent by the Romans themselves from earliest times.

The oldest form of Roman religion that we know is Animism. The early Romans worshipped "spirits", in their own language, *numina*, i.e., "beings with will-power". These spirits were associated with all manner of visible objects, states, and actions, that came within the sphere of the life of an agricultural people. They are particularly associated, so far as we can judge, with function. The early Romans gave their *numina* no personal shape, nor did they conceive of them dwelling in temples. They were looked upon rather as the indwelling spirits of the objects or actions with which they were associated. The *numina* were regarded as hostile, or perhaps better, as neutral powers. The Roman attitude toward them is expressed by the word *religio*, certainly used pri-

marily in the sense of a "feeling of fear", "awe", or "anxiety". The Romans believed that they could practically control the good will and cooperation of the *numina* by certain set prayers and sacrifices, scrupulously performed.

The regulating of the relations between men and the *numina* passed in the course of time, from the hands of the *pater familias*,—except in some purely domestic matters,—into the control of the state. The individual Roman came to rely on the state to establish the proper relations between its members and its divinities. Under state control, there developed, accordingly, an elaborate *ius divinum*—the source of the later *ius civile*—which dealt completely with all questions concerning the relations between gods and men. By the fulfillment of all the necessary prayers and sacrifices in the most punctilious ritualistic fashion the *pax deorum*, i.e., the harmonious agreement between men and the *numina*, was invariably secured.

So far as we can observe, the early Romans had no belief whatever in a system of rewards and punishments after death. The dead were apparently thought of vaguely as hostile spirits that had to be driven away by certain rites and formulae. Offerings were made to the dead, but the dead were neither invoked nor worshipped.

The early Roman religion certainly promoted the sanctity of family life by investing, not merely the great events, but even the ordinary daily affairs of that life with a religious sanction. In the hands of the state it unquestionably promoted a sense of public duty, but at the same time it tended inevitably to become stultified and unreal, and thus to contribute in itself to the marked decay in genuine religious feeling among the Romans which we note from the third century B. C.

The moral influence of the early Roman religion—outside the family circle—was not really direct, but largely resulted from the discipline and the sense of duty which it imposed. In the words of Warde Fowler, who has dealt with the problems of the early religious beliefs and practices of the Romans more satisfactorily than most modern scholars, "the one feature of this religion which had a moral value was the constant and indispensable attention to the details of duty; if these were not duties to a deity who is righteous and the source of all righteousness, yet they were duties

that must be fulfilled; and they constituted a righteous feeling to towards the divine beings, which created a claim upon them to deal righteously towards the Roman, and to hinder and destroy his enemies, human and material. Beyond this we cannot go, the *pietas* of the old Roman was a valuable quality in itself but it never led him to base his daily conduct upon higher motives than obedience to the state and to its authorities as mediators between himself and a dangerous spiritual world." <sup>9</sup>

### THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY AMONG THE PLAINS INDIANS

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THE Plains Region may be briefly described as that vast territory stretching between the regions west of the Mississippi to the Rocky Mountains, having its northern extremity in Athabasca, and terminating in the south at the Rio Grande.

I shall confine myself to those tribes of whose religion we have evidence in their mythology, folklore, initiation and puberty rites, cults and prayers. It is evident that we are not at a loss for material wherewith to reconstruct the religious culture of the Plains tribes. Such an elaborate ceremonial as the ghost dance, which originated among the Paviotso of Nevada about 1888, and rapidly spread westward into the Plains area, infecting many groups of Indians, the Sun Dance, chiefly confined to the Plains tribes, and frequently performed up to our times by the Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Assiniboine, and Shoshoni, the elaborate description of ceremonies like the Hako, among the Pawnee, by Miss Fletcher—offer abundant data for our theme.

Some of the more important of the Plains tribes are the Dakota or Sioux, the Omaha, the Assiniboine, the Ponca, the Winnebago, the Mandan, the Crow, and the Osage of the Siouan stock; the Pawnee, Wichita, Arikara, and Caddo proper of the Caddoan stock; and finally the Arapahoe, Cheyenne and Kiowa, this last forming an independent linguistic stock.

<sup>9</sup> W. Warde Fowler, art. *Roman Religion* in Hastings' *Encyclopaedia of Religion and Ethics*, vol. x, p. 829

The tribes we shall refer to are, of course, in no sense primitive, like the so-called "marginal" remnants—the Fuegian tribes, the Andaman Islanders, the Vedda of Ceylon, etc., dwelling in isolated corners of the globe. We are dealing rather with people who had risen to higher cultural achievements—hoe-culture, and also hunting involving greater technique than that known to the simple food-gathering peoples. This higher culture is overlaid with magical and ritualistic practices of which the more primitive "marginal" people were innocent. I wish to indorse one of the conclusions of Father Cooper in his sketch of "The Origin and Early History of Religion" (Primitive Man, Vol. ii, nos. 3 and 4, July and October, 1929) in which he says: "Broadly speaking, the general rule appears to hold, that the lower one goes down in the scale of material culture the less does he find of the three elements of magic, manism and animism, which constitute from ninety to ninety-nine per cent of the superhumanism of the intramarginal or more advanced uncivilized peoples of the world".

In the first place it is necessary to recall that the Sioux word *wakanda*, which "stands for the mysterious life power permeating all natural forms and forces and all phases of man's conscious life" as well as the name for the Great Spirit, *Wakan'tanka*, show that the most noted of the Plains tribes possessed religion as part of their culture. Reverend Owen Dorsey, who was a missionary among the Sioux and also a student of their language, holds that the Sioux always believed in *Wakan'tanka*. Miss Densmore<sup>1</sup> says that during several seasons' work among the Teton Sioux she made diligent inquiry concerning this matter, and the unvarying opinion of the old men was that the Sioux have always believed in *Wakan'tanka*. Dr. Eastman (*Ohiyesa*), an educated Santee Dakota, wrote that the worship of *Wakan'tanka* among his people "was silent, solitary, free from all self-seeking".

The following simple statement of an old Sioux, Chased-by-Bears, shows the attitude towards the Deity: "When a man does a piece of work which is admired by all we say that it is wonderful; but when we see the changes of day and of night, the sun, moon, and stars in the sky, and the changing seasons upon the earth with their ripening fruits anyone must realize that it is the work of someone more powerful than man. Greatest of all is the

<sup>1</sup> Bureau of American Ethnology, Bulletin 61, 85

sun, without which we could not live. The birds and the beasts, the trees and the rocks, are the work of some great power. . . . It is right that men should repent when they make or fulfill a vow to Wakan'tanka. No matter how good a man may appear to others, there are always things he has done for which he ought to be sorry, and he will feel better if he repents of them. Men often weep in the Sun Dance and cry aloud. . . . We talk to Wakan'tanka and are sure that he hears us, and yet it is hard to explain what we believe about this".

But did belief in Wakan'tanka, the Great Spirit, influence the conduct of the Sioux braves? Listen to the following Sun Dance prayer, which was uttered by Red Weasel, an aged Teton Sioux: "Wakan'tanka, hear me. This day I am to tell your word. But without sin I shall speak. The tribe shall live. Behold me for I am humble. From above watch me. You are always the truth, listen to me. My friends and relatives, sitting here, and I shall be at peace. May our voices be heard at the future goal you have prepared for us."<sup>2</sup>

The well known Ghost Dance of the Prairie Indians, which saw its climax, or better, its tragic "final performance" in the Sioux outbreak of 1890, is shot through with religious significance. It was, in fact, the last desperate effort of tribes, fighting a losing battle against civilization, to safeguard their ancient traditions, culture, and economic independence. Mooney has written a monograph of lasting value on this interesting aspect of primitive religious psychology. The revelation made to the Indians by a young Paiute Indian, Wovoka (Cutter), was to the effect that a new era of peace and happiness was to dawn for the Red Man. But what of its moral significance? Mooney tells us that: "Before going into the dance the men, or at least the leaders, fasted for twenty-four hours, and then at sunrise entered the sweat-house for the religious rite of purification preliminary to painting themselves for the dance". There is no doubt that during this period of intense religious excitement the people, not only prayed and fasted, but abstained, to a large extent, from those things, which according to their own estimate, were wrong and would make them less pleasing to Wakan'tanka.

<sup>2</sup> loc. cit., 95



The Wahpeton-Dakota, one of the seven primary divisions of the Dakota, had a medicine dance, described by Alanson Skinner, preparatory to which candidates were initiated into the medicine society. At that time they received certain "rules of life", some of them being the following: respect your home; let there be no quarrels; when visitors come respect them and bid them welcome; love your neighbor; honor your colleagues of the Wakanwasipi; when a fellow member dies you must offer presents of clothes; no one must refuse an invitation of friends.

The other noteworthy religious and ceremonial dance is the Sun Dance. It was the rite belonging to the bison area of Plains Indians, being performed by the Arapahoe, Cheyenne, Siksika, and Cree of Algonquin stock; the Dakota, Assiniboine, Mandan, Crow, Ponca, and Omaha of Siouan stock; the Pawnee of Caddoan stock; the Kiowa; and the Shoshoni and Ute of Shoshonean stock.

Among some tribes like the Sioux, the ceremony was enacted every year and was in charge of a special priesthood. Preparatory to the dance the participating priests or medicine men spent some time in a secret tepee, smoking, praying, and fasting, and preparing the objects to be used in the dance. A special lodge was built, with a sacred pole in the center, representing the sun as the great mystery, great medicine man above.

The moral significance of this characteristic of the Plains Indians religious ceremonial lay in the fasting, and occasional self-inflicted tortures and laceration of the body to obtain some favor of the gods.

Walter McClintock, in his "Old North Trail" (London, 1910, 297), cites the following prayer of a Blackfoot chief who directed this religious ceremonial: "Great Sun Power! I am praying for my people that they may be happy in the summer and that they may live through the cold winter. Many are sick and in want. Pity them and let them survive. Grant that they may live long and have abundance. May we go through these ceremonies correctly, as you taught our forefathers to do in the days that are past. If we make mistakes, pity us. Help us, Mother Earth! For we depend on your goodness. Let there be rain to water the prairies, that the grass may grow long and the berries be abundant. O Morning Star! when you look down upon us, give us peace and refreshing sleep. Great Spirit! bless our children, friends, and



visitors through a happy life. May our trails lie straight and level before us. Let us live to be old. We are all your children and ask these things with good hearts”.

I should say that the expressive petition: “May our trails lie straight and level before us” is an humble prayer for help to live justly and in peace and harmony with one’s fellowman. It is proof that religion was connected with, and influenced morality, among the aborigines of the great western plains.

Prof. Hartley B. Alexander, quoting the last petition of this earnest prayer, “We are all your children and ask these things with good hearts”, comments wisely: “Is not this the essence of religious faith?”

We have just been introduced to the Blackfeet, a western offshoot of the immense Algonquin family. The place taken by the Supreme Being of the Algonquin tribes of the East is here taken by the Sun. The sun was the center of worship, though the tribe also recognized a supernatural being known as Napi, Old Man, who may be an incarnation of the sun. The Blackfoot like the Sióux often held the Sun Dance in fulfillment of a vow at the time of personal or some other person’s danger.

But unfortunately the mythology of the tribe, especially the obscene traits concerning “Old Man” and which are derived from the Eastern Algonquins, vitiate the Blackfoot religion, and practically deprive morality of a religious basis. McClintock tries to save the reputation of the tribe for morality, but his picture is offset by the sexual license prevailing at the celebration of the Horns Society.

The Arapahoe are another important Plains tribe of the great Algonquin family, the northern division being now settled on the Wind River Reservation (St. Stephen’s Mission, Fremont County, Wyoming). The Arapahoe Sun Dance, as described by G. A. Dorsey, and their traditions and mythology, collected by Dorsey, Kroeber, and Voth, gives us an insight into the religion of the tribe.

The Arapahoe ceremony of the Sun Dance, which is performed after a vow or pledge that the speaker will erect the dance lodge, is like that of the Sioux. It is made up of hundreds of rites, songs, prayers, dances, gestures, inclinations of the head, and so forth—each one of which has its own meaning. It is astonishing, says

Father Schmidt, that this elaborate and complicated ritual, in which almost no word, step, or motion is left to the option of the individual, but is regulated by minute rubrical directions, has been faithfully preserved in the memory of these children of the wild.

The entire ceremony lasts seven or eight days, four of them being devoted to preparation in the lodge, called the Rabbit-tepee. Earnest prayers are offered during the performance. The following is one spoken by Hochen, chief priest or referee of the pageant, who personated the sun: "My Grandfather, Light of the World; Old-Woman-Night, my Grandmother,—I stand here before this people, old and young. May whatever they undertake to do in this ceremony, and may their desires and wishes and anxieties in their every-day life, meet with your approval; may the growing corn not fail them and may everything they put in the ground mature, in order that they may have food and nourishment for their children and friends. May whatever light comes from above, and also the rain, be strengthening to them, that they may live on the earth under your protection. May they make friends with the neighboring tribes, and especially with the white people. May the tribe be free from all wrong, from all crimes, and may they be good people".

The last words of this petition are proof of the decisive influence of belief in a Supreme Deity on human conduct. We are, however, also interested in another important question. Is the richly varied Sun Dance a proof for the belief of the people in a Supreme Being? Though in the Sun Dance ritual, prayers and songs, there seems to be an intermingling of the tribal ancestor with the Supreme Being, the latter plays the chief rôle in the ceremony. The Supreme Being is represented as the Creator of the ancestor. The person invoked as "Our Father", "My Father", "Man Above", "Old Man", must therefore be the Highest Being. In fact, do we not detect a faint echo of that universal prayer repeated by all of us every day, in the opening petition of the solemn invocation with which the leader concludes the second day of the ceremony? "My Father, Man-Above, we are sitting here on the ground in humble spirit and of poor heart, and ask your tender mercy upon us, one and all. Through the merits of your children who taught us this law of the Sacred-Offerings-lodge which we

are about to locate, may we do it in such a manner as to obtain your favor and increased good spirit, to the end of the lodge."<sup>3</sup>

On the basis of the prayers and ceremonies of the Sun Dance it may be confidently asserted that the religion of the Arapaho is monotheistic.

The Sun Dance ceremony here referred to took place among the Southern Arapaho of Oklahoma in 1901 and 1902, though the inferences made concerning the significance of the dance, hold good for their brethren of the North in Wyoming.

The Cheyenne are a third important Plains tribe of the great Algonquin family. The Northern Cheyenne now dwell in Montana (St. Benedict Labre Mission); the Southern, in Oklahoma. In the case of this Plains tribe it is interesting to note that it is their folklore and mythology as recorded by Kroeber (J. A. F. L., XIII, 1900, 161-190) and Grinnell (Ib., XX), that give us an insight into their religious beliefs. On the whole their religious notions are of remarkable purity and beauty. Closely dependent thereon is the high regard entertained for the chastity of young women and the institution of a celibate order of men who regarded meditation on the greatness, beauty, and wisdom of the Creator in His works, their special duty. But these spiritual men were also known as the bravest of their tribe.

A high tribute was also paid by other Plains tribes—Blackfeet, Sarsi, Southern Cheyenne, Ogalala, Arikara, to the chastity of women, when the buffalo tongues were distributed at the Buffalo ceremony.

The Atsina are a detached band of the Arapaho, at one time associated with the Blackfeet, and now more commonly known as the Grosventres. They are located (at St. Paul's Mission) in Northern Montana. They pray to a being called "White-Man-Up-There", who was above all other deities. They were uncertain, however, whether this was the same person as the Nixant of their myths. There is reason to infer that belief in this (or some) Supreme Being taught them high moral conduct. For one of the features of the Grosventre Sun Dance was the summons of the old men, after the dance, at dusk, to the wives of the dancers to follow them, their "Grandfathers", when the women came out

<sup>3</sup> Dorsey, *Arapahoe Sun Dance*, Field Columbian Museum Publications, Anthropological Series, Pub. 75, 79

of their tents. The "Grandfathers" went north of the camp circle; the "Granddaughters", that is, the wives of the dancers, went after them, each one carrying in her hand a pipe. The latter turned to their grandfathers, and each asked one of them to take the pipe and smoke it. After much persuasion the old man took the pipe. Then the woman asked him to pray for her success in this world and for a long life. The man turned the pipe to the east, south, west, and north, and upwards, lighted and smoked it. After he had finished smoking, he threw out the ashes, held the pipe towards heaven and prayed for his "granddaughter", who at this time was lying on the ground. After the prayer, the women returned to the dance lodge where their husbands awaited them. This ceremony took place four nights in succession. Only the last night did the women and their husbands leave the dance lodge and retire to sleep in their huts. No doubt the people held that this scene took place under the eyes of the "White-Man-Up-There". For when the old man turns the pipe, which he has been smoking upwards to heaven and prays for the young woman entrusted to him, he turns to no one else but to this Supreme Being.

**THE RELATIONS BETWEEN RELIGION AND MORALITY  
AMONG THE ONONGHE TRIBES OF BRITISH  
NEW GUINEA**

PÉRE DUBUY, M.S.C.

Ononghe, Papua

THE Ononghe territory embraces the region around the upper course of the Vanapa River, in British New Guinea, and includes the neighboring slopes of Mt. Albert Edward and Mt. Scratchley. Ononghe is ten days' march in from the coast, and is about sixty kilometers from Mafulu. The present writer has been stationed in this district for fifteen years (1912-1927).

The Ononghe natives are a horticultural people, giving most of their attention to their gardens. They also raise pigs for their feasts, and hunt in the bush.

The chief moral precept is: Do not do what will displease your fellows. It is bad to steal, if you allow yourself to be caught. As for veracity, the natives tend to say what they believe will be to their interest or what they think will please you.

In the matter of chastity, they do not practice unnatural vices, but what is "natural" they do. Boys and girls cease to play together from the age of six or seven years. They marry from the age of sixteen or eighteen. Abortion is common.

The Ononghe aborigines take human life rather readily. The causes of strife and of life-taking are revenge for murder, violation of women, or thefts of pigs. Such crimes are not uncommon, and the offended person takes the law into his own hands and administers justice according to his capacity to do so. Unfortunately such justice is exercised only too often upon the innocent, for it is commonly impossible to detect or to reach the real culprit. Hence occur murders without end, one following and leading to another. Cannibalism is flourishing a short distance from our station.

Hospitality is in high honor. Members of the same tribe aid one another on all occasions.

Temperance prevails, as there is no native intoxicating drink,—only water. As for temperance in eating, when there is nothing to eat, they go without; when there is plenty they eat to the bursting point. Cases of indigestion are very frequent. After every big feast, deaths occur from overeating pig or from eating spoiled pig meat.

Children have very little respect for parents, and there is none at all for authority, liberty being prized as the greatest of all goods. Authority is difficult to establish and still more difficult to maintain.

Temper is ordinarily well under control. Generally, the natives are not violent, nor do they fly into a rage.

Ambition is not marked, as all stand on or near the same level. The great man is he who has killed much, who has plenty of wives and pigs and wealth, and who does nothing. The great or ideal woman is she who is beautiful, and who dances before the men. At a feast, when all the men dance, two of the women precede the men with their own dance. This is looked upon by the women as a great honor.

Let us now pass from the moral code itself to the motives and influences that enforce it.

There is no belief in a Supreme Being. Certain rites are practised regarding inferior supernatural beings. But in general religious motives are not proposed to the young in moral matters, nor do such motives so function in the lives of adults.

Morality is based upon fear of the spear and the club. Of course, too, pride, flattery, praise, ridicule, fear, and so forth have their place in motivating conduct.

There is little that can be called direct moral training for the young. No special punishments for children are resorted to. No adolescent institutions at which moral instruction would be given, are in vogue. Children are emancipated from the time they can walk. No particular watch or surveillance is kept over them, except the minimum lest death or grave mishap befall them.

The very young boys do not work, but gradually they participate in the clearing and planting labors of their parents. The girls, like their mothers, plant, clean, gather sweet potatoes, weave nets, and make bark clothing.

The boys play with spears and bows and arrows, amuse themselves with cat's cradles, and so forth. The girls' games are cat's cradles, hide-and-seek, and so forth.

Both work and play help keep the children out of mischief. But, on the other hand, at play accidents occur, sometimes fatal ones, as do also frequent quarrels.

As for adults, the chief motives or forces making for observance of the moral code is the fear of reprisals, and, for graver offences, the fear of death inflicted in revenge. A person, if offended, will take revenge, unless compensation or payment be given and accepted in lieu of blood revenge. Shame, fear of losing standing, the example and word of elders or chiefs, and other motives come into play. In general, the most important factors impelling toward observance of the moral code appear to be the fear of reprisals and the example and word of elders or chiefs.

#### SIXTH ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE

THE Sixth Annual Meeting of the Catholic Anthropological Conference was held on Tuesday, April 7, 1931, at The Catholic University of America, Washington, D. C. The morning session was presided over by the president, the Very Rev. Dr. Michael A. Mathis, C.S.C.; the afternoon session, by the Very Rev. Dr. William J. Kerby.

The following officers were elected: Honorary President, Rt.



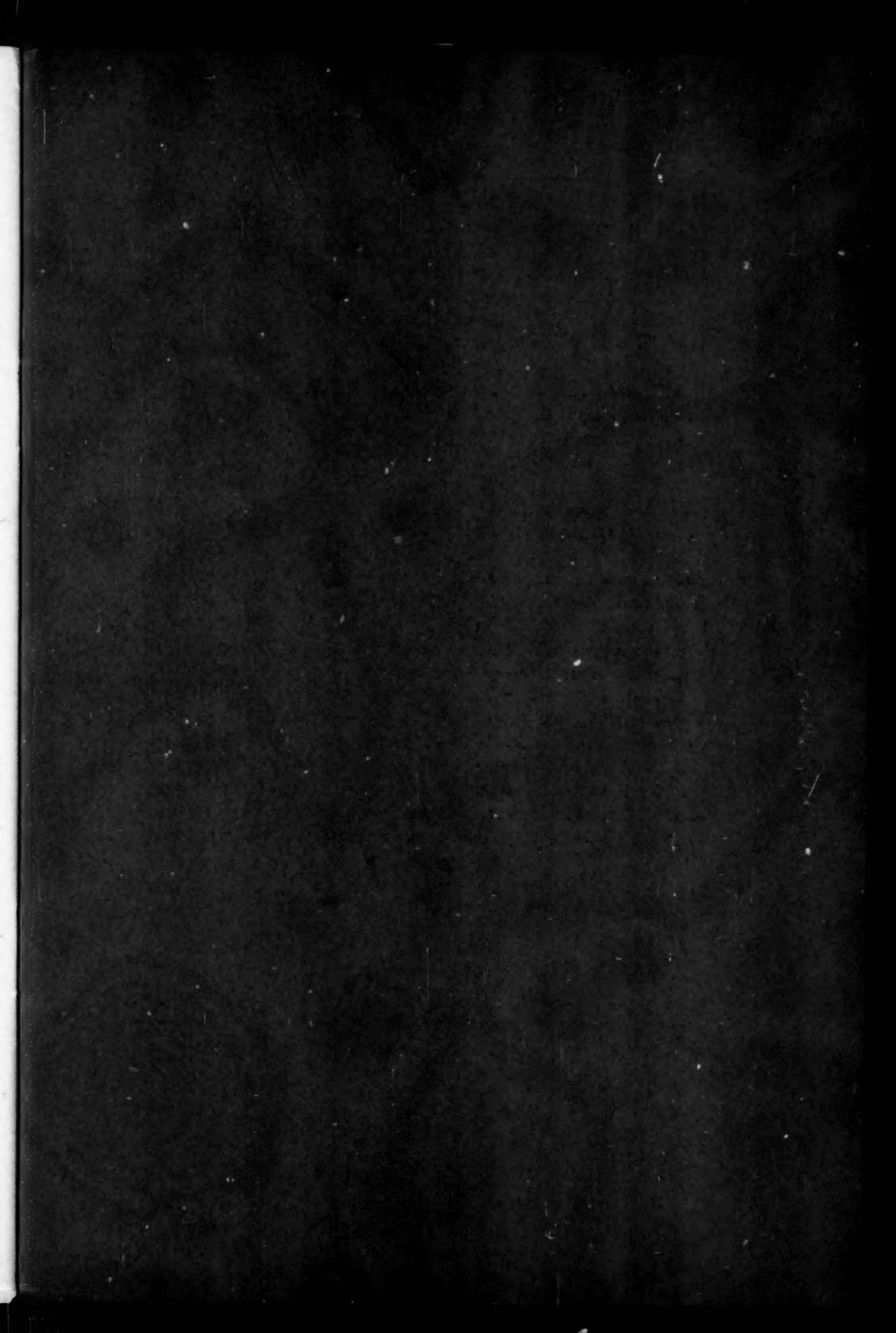
Rev. Thomas J. Shahan, D.D.; President, Very Rev. Michael A. Mathis, C.S.C.; Vice-President, Rev. Leopold J. Tibesar, A.F.M.; Secretary-Treasurer, Rev. John M. Cooper; Executive Board: Dr. Anna Dengel, Rev. Dr. Stephen Richarz, S.V.D., Rev. Dr. J. B. Tenny, S.S., to 1932; Rev. Berard Haile, O.F.M., Rev. Joseph Meier, M.S.C., Rev. Morice Vanoverbergh, C.I.C.M., to 1933; Rev. Albert Muntsch, S.J., Rev. Adolph Frenay, O.P., Rev. Maurice Sheehy, to 1934.

The following papers were read: The Relations of Religion and Morality among the Early Semites, by Rev. Edward A. Arbez, S.S., Professor of Sacred Scripture, The Sulpician Seminary, D.C.; The Relations of Religion and Morality among the Early Greeks and Romans, by Dr. Martin R. P. McGuire, Instructor in Latin and Greek, Catholic University of America; D.C.; The Relations of Religion and Morality among the Plains Indians, by Rev. Albert Muntsch, S.J., Professor of Sociology, St. Louis University, St. Louis; The Relations of Religion and Morality in Primitive Culture, by Rev. John M. Cooper, Professor of Anthropology, Catholic University of America, D.C.

These papers were designed as a symposium on the very complicated problem of the relations between religion and moral codes and conduct in early human culture. The first two papers are a review of this relationship in the early stages of cultural development among the Semites, Greeks, and Romans. The third paper represents a sounding taken on a less advanced culture, that of the North American Plains Indians. The last paper endeavors to sum up the facts regarding religio-moral relations in primitive culture generally and to suggest the probable primitive relationship of religion to morality. The first three papers are published in the present number of *Primitive Man*. The fourth paper will appear in the forthcoming number, now in press.

The next meeting of the Conference will be held on Tuesday of Easter week, 1932, at Washington, D. C. There was some discussion as to the advisability of changing the date of the annual meeting to some other season of the year. It was voted that the secretary canvass the whole membership of the Conference regarding their wishes in the matter and that he report thereupon to the Conference at its next annual meeting.





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